MERLIN'S ISLE

A STUDY OF RUDYARD KIPLING'S ENGLAND

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BY

W. WORSTER

"Britannia insularum optima . . .
. . . quinque inhabitatur populis . . ."
Geoffrey of Monmouth: Hist. Britonum.

". . . She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare."
Puck's Song.

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To the Memory of

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"qui procul hinc . . . qui ante diem periit . . ."

MERLIN'S ISLE

I

THE earlier works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling were exotics; they dealt with lands and peoples of which the English at home knew very little indeed. For many years, Rudyard Kipling was regarded as a teller of Indian tales, little concerned with the life and ways and doings of the insular Briton. London, east or west, the City and Suburbia, the English countryside, the English home—he cared for none of these things. His subject-matter was brought from afar; gathered, as he later puts it,

> "In extended observation of the ways and works of man,
> From the Four-mile Radius roughly to the plains of Hindustan . . ."

—and the Four-mile Radius itself plays but an insignificant part as a starting-point for wanderings about the world.

The *Departmental Ditties* are studies "in Indian ink," the *Plain Tales*, and the stories in *Life's*

Handicap, are almost exclusively Indian; the *Soldier Tales* and *Barrack-Room Ballads* have little to do with soldiering at home. In *The Light that Failed* there is a large contempt for the home-bred public and the man who has been as far as Brighton beach. The two *Jungle Books* touch new fields with the stories of the White Seal and Quiquern. In *The Seven Seas* and *The Five Nations*, the dominant note is one of far-reaching adventure; the craving "for to admire . . . this world so wide." *Captains Courageous* —a fine example, by the way, of the assimilative faculty in art—lies curiously out of view; one is apt to forget it. In a mental survey of Kipling's work one looks, so to speak, instinctively eastward and south; most of it, like most of the British Empire, lies that way — and the Newfoundland banks are outside the field of vision.

In *Many Inventions*, which comes before the *Jungle Book*, and in *The Day's Work*, after *Captains Courageous*, there are several stories where the scene is laid partly or wholly in England. Some of them are especially significant, though their importance is not, perhaps, immediately apparent. "A Matter of Fact," "An Error in the Fourth Dimension" (with certain touches in "My Sunday at Home"), form a kind of tentative pre-

lude to something not yet coherent; something which later finds its form and being in the "Puck" stories. And the prelude itself is recapitulated—pointing the moral, so to speak—in "An Habitation Enforced."

But, for the most part, England still takes only a subordinate place in Kipling's work. In "The Brushwood Boy" we are shown a glimpse of an English home, but this is exceptional; the men with whom the author is chiefly concerned are rarely to be found at home. London is a "good place to bank in, bad place to bunk in," a place where the war correspondents meet and recuperate between campaigns, but unendurable after a while. It serves as a stage, where subalterns home on leave tell of adventures in the Burmese jungle, or where Charlie Mears, clerk in a City bank, speaks through his trances of lost Furdurstrandi. Even the inimitable Brugglesmith is introduced with a savour of engine-room and ocean-going traffic, by M'Phee. The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot, whose work lies in an east-end slum, seems almost like a digression, an excursion on the part of the author into an alien sphere. "One View of the Question" shows a London grotesque, incomprehensible, as it appears to Shafiz Ullah Khan, the emissary of a native Prince; the London that naively invites an

Indian noble to sit at meat with one who appears to be descended from a line of Bengali rag and bone merchants.

The Four-mile Radius is a starting-point, hardly more important in itself than the station from which one sets out upon a journey. The playground of Kim is all India—"this great and beautiful land." The author himself goes farther; the plains of Hindustan content him only for a while. With the Indian stories, one requires a glossary; later on, one needs an atlas. It is better, perhaps, to refrain from using either; an indication of direction as "from the Kuriles" is much more effective, from the æsthetic point of view, when the reader has but a vague idea as to where—or what—the Kuriles may be. The value of vagueness and distance was pointed out by Burke in his curious Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful; it was recognised by the Romantic School, and counted for much in the original vogue of Ossian—which book, it will be remembered, made M'Turk, the Celt, sheer drunk for three days. Much of the immediate charm of Kipling's earlier work lies in this frequent importation of the remote and little-known. Dick Heldar's catalogue of sketches, ranging from Chinese pig-boats to the battlefields of the Sudan, and his

"irrelevant anecdotes"—it is Torpenhow calls them so, and criticism is thus adroitly disarmed—are valuable assets. In "The Ballad of the Bolivar," the "seven men from all the world" appeal at once to the imagination, preparing for the subsequent "seven men from out of hell." The effect is that of Victor Hugo's Paladins: "*ils venaient de si loin qu'ils en étaient terribles.*"

And the range of Kipling's art is not confined to limits of geographical extent. From observation of the ways and works of man he passes to the consideration of animals. The elephant, the mongoose and the snake, the beasts of the jungle, the seal of the Polar seas, the horses on an American farm—all are described with the same convincing insight, the same verisimilitude of psychological detail, that we find, say, in *The Story of the Gadsbys.* In dead things, too, he finds matter of very human interest. A railway engine, the parts of a ship, go through their education just as does a newly-joined subaltern or a recruit in the ranks.

Altogether, then, the *dramatis personæ* of Mr. Kipling's production during the first ten years or so—say from *Departmental Ditties* to *The Day's Work*—are drawn from an extremely wide and varied field, lying for the most part outside England altogether. The *mise en scène*, the

atmosphere, are predominantly exotic; the language itself is effectively interspersed with native words and phrases. This frequent use of the vernacular by an author so widely read had actually led to the inclusion, in continental dictionaries, of many words from the Kipling glossaries as parts of the English vocabulary.

The most distinctively English trait in all these works is the ethical point of view; the moral code by which the characters are governed. Save where some definite moral attitude is involved by the nature of the subject—as in some of the native Indian stories, for instance—the author imposes his own, which is that of his race and class. Often it is the obvious and only applicable one; the Englishmen of whom he writes, in whatever corner of the world they may be found, belong for the most part to this class, and their actions are guided by the principles of their upbringing.

From the days of Froissart, the English have been regarded as a nation of marked and peculiar characteristics; the foreigner is constantly disconcerted both by the things they do and by the things they decline to do. It is so with Kipling's men. Their conduct is often astonishing to the

alien. The author himself has been at some pains to show that it is incomprehensible to the American. The story of Private Ortheris and the subaltern who strikes him on parade is one which only an Englishman could have imagined. In many cases, the dramatic interest of the stories lies in the workings of a particular order of mind, subject to a particular code; the conflict presupposes the existence of certain caste restrictions, traditions, and ideals, just as classical tragedy requires the broader and more general principles of religion or honour.

II

WHAT are these ideals and traditions? With the works of the author before us, we can piece together a fairly complete view of the code, just as we can reconstruct from Homer the ordinary life of those days, or, from memoirs and diaries, that of certain periods in history.[1] Scattered about through the Anglo-Indian stories we find frequent indications of one or another principle for which men will and must make sacrifices, the only alternative lying beyond the pale, in the category of "things no fellow can do."

A prominent feature is the law of reticence, of keeping one's troubles to oneself, or making light of them. Hummil, assistant engineer on a lonely station ("At the End of the Passage"), racked by sleeplessness and haunted by horrors not of this world, strives to conceal his distress

[1] Part of the matter contained in Chapters II., III., and VI. was originally published in Danish under the titles of *Kiplings Maend* and *Kiplings England*; articles in *Gaas Danske Magasin*, Sept. 1912 and Aug. 1914.

from his fellows, though he dreads being left alone. They on their part respect his reserve, and make no attempt to force his confidence, though aware that it must be something serious which could unnerve a tried comrade to the point of insulting his guests at his own table. Holden, a Government servant, who has run through the gamut of human happiness in the cycle of life and death, all "Without Benefit of Clergy," tells no one of his treasure or its loss. Dicky Hatt, secretly married to a girl at home ("In the Pride of his Youth"), endeavours to live on half his pay, and is looked on as niggardly and unsociable. But he confides in no one the reason of his sacrifice. His early hopes and plans are guarded as jealously as the subsequent loss of his honour.

It is not customary among these men to speak of matters involving any degree of serious feeling. In *The Light that Failed* there is a characteristic conversation between Torpenhow and Dick.

"I haven't put your back up by anything I've said lately, have I?"

"You? No, how could you?"

"Liver out of order?"

"The truly healthy man doesn't know he has a liver. . . . I suppose it's my soul."

"The truly healthy man doesn't know he has a soul. What business have you with luxuries of that kind?"

It should be noted, however, that Kipling does at times allow his men to utter some expression of feeling, as if it pleased him to hover on the verge of emotion. Having first carefully emphasised the natural reticence and reserve of his characters, he places them in a situation where circumstances force from them a grudging display of emotion. Lowndes and Mottram are riding away after a trying afternoon with Hummil ("At the End of the Passage"), where each has been putting constraint upon himself to endure patiently the behaviour of their host. "Good-night, and—God bless you," says Lowndes.

"What's wrong now?"

"Oh, nothing." Lowndes gathered up his whip, and as he flicked Mottram's mare on the flank, added, "You're not a bad little chap, that's all."

Little outbursts of this sort are met with occasionally in the earlier stories; in the later works they hardly occur at all.

There is a reticence, too, with regard to things done. The formula according to which a man relates his own achievements or experiences when called upon is something like this: "Oh, I did

so-and-so, and then so-and-so happened, and that was all." The introductory "Oh" strikes a characteristic note; there is something offhand, self-depreciating about it. "Nothing to speak of, really, you know."

In "A Conference of the Powers," Eustace Cleever, novelist, is introduced to three young men home on leave from India. Naively he opines that any change from life in garrison towns must be a godsend to the soldier.

"The remark was not a happy one, for Boileau had just come off the Frontier, the Infant had been on the warpath for nearly eighteen months, and the little red man Nevin two months before had been sleeping under the stars at the peril of his life. But none of them tried to explain. . . ."

The Infant is then called upon to tell the story of his doings; what was the "work" upon which he had been engaged.

"'Oh, keeping things in order generally, and running about after little *dakus*—that's dacoits—and so on. There's nothing to explain.'

"'Make that young Leviathan speak,' said Cleever impatiently, above his glass.

"'How can he speak?' said I"—the author is inclined to be a trifle didactic at times—"'he's done the work. The two don't go together.'"

And when finally the Infant is persuaded to speak, his story is told throughout from a humorous point of view. The exertions and privations of the campaign are matter for amusement. Crucified corpses he dismisses casually, but dilates with enjoyment on the spectacle of Hicksey and the Boh tangled up together on the floor in a mosquito net. And having told his tale, he apologises. "'I'm 'fraid I've been gassing awf'ly, sir.' He feared that, misled by enthusiasm, he had filled up the novelist's time with unprofitable recital of trivial anecdote." His enthusiasm is all for the humorous side, the fun of the thing. And Cleever gathers that it was a pleasure to these young men to administer and fight.

The gaily careless way in which these young men speak of their doings might be misleading if one had not seen them *at* their work. Work is one of Kipling's favourite themes; he delights and excels in the treatment of it. He is the poet and evangelist of work. "The Devil and the Deep Sea" is an epic of work; a battlepiece of overpowering, sense-obliterating energy and will. "The Bridge Builders" and "William the Conqueror" are preeminently records of achievement. And in other stories, where it crops up incidentally, as it were, the topic is always treated in a characteristic way;

there is something in the author's mind which responds, instantly and powerfully, to the slightest suggestion of work to be done or doing. The work of his men is something predominant, though they affect to make light of it, as a man will hide affection for a woman under some bantering nickname; their achievements are superlative, yet ever insufficient to the aspiring mind. Desire outruns performance; the ideal of yet more work is ever just beyond. Kipling has nothing but scorn for those who rest on the way, "stopping the work half-done for an instant dole of praise."

And this work, it should be noted, is very largely its own reward; not a thing to be paid for with some definite and tangible *quid pro quo*—the recognition of its quality by one's fellow-workers is valuable chiefly as justifying one's own satisfaction with it as well and truly done. Also, it is nearly always work for a cause; the contribution of the individual to a concerted whole. It is playing for one's side, not for oneself. In the Anglo-Indian stories, we are frequently reminded of the conditions under which men are called upon to work in this arena. Do your work well, and ten to one someone else will get the credit; fail, from whatsoever cause, and you will have to bear the blame. Often, too, the work is done without

support, or in face of actual opposition from allies or nominal leaders. The principle of putting the telescope to one's blind eye is illustrated humorously in "A Conference of the Powers," and with a certain bitterness in "The Head of the District." Similarly, Pagett, M.P., in the *Departmental Ditties*, is presented merely as a comical figure; there is more bitterness in the treatment of the Member for Lower Tooting ("At the End of the Passage"). Both are forerunners of Lethabie Groombride in "Little Foxes." Kipling is constantly reminding us, in prose and verse, that the building of the Empire was the work of men who did not stop to wait for orders; that its maintenance lies with men who have the courage truly to serve the lands they rule, in spite of neglect and opposition on the part of theorists in high places and mean little souls at home. It is the work that matters, not the credit of the individual.

Another noticeable thing about these men is the manner in which they exercise authority. A sense of superiority, whether justifiable or not, comes naturally to the European dealing with "natives." In "His Chance in Life" we are shown how the last faint vestige of white blood in Michele D'Cruze answers to the appeal of "Sahib" when trouble has arisen in the little out-of-the-way station, and the

Babu comes to him for orders. It is interesting, by the way, to compare this with the effect of the opposite influence as shown in "The Comprehension of Private Copper." The British Tommy, taken prisoner on the top of a South African kopje, is at first impressed by the lordly ways of his renegade enemy; gradually, however, he perceives the taint of black blood in the latter, feels his own superiority accordingly, and turns the tables.

But Kipling's men—the men of the class and type here considered—exhibit in their dealings with those under them something more than a consciousness of power—to wit, the consciousness of responsibility. *Noblesse oblige.* From the subaltern in command of a detachment to the Head of a turbulent District, the dominant principle of government is the same; each feels himself responsible for the welfare of the men he rules. Yardley-Orde, dying of fever, thinks to the last of his district, and exhorts his men to behave wisely after he is gone, "'for though ye be strong men, ye are children. . . .' 'Keep the young men quiet, listen to the old men, and obey. And I will speak to whatever god I may encounter, and tell him that the Khusru Kheyl are good men. Ye have my leave to go.'" Tallantire, after a

successful skirmish, is miserable because the sword at his wrist is flecked with the blood of the tribe that his dead chief had kept in leash so well. Yet this attitude does not prevent the use of sternness when occasion demands, and the two together make for mutual respect between governors and governed. The closing scene between Tallantire and Khoda Dad Khan, in "The Head of the District," is an excellent illustration of this. Khoda Dad Khan has throughout been leader of the loyal party in his tribe, and having taken a part himself in suppressing the rebellion, comes on the part of the tribesmen to discuss terms of surrender.

"'Who art thou, seller of dog's flesh,' thundered Tallantire, 'to speak of terms and treaties? Get hence to the hills—go, and wait there starving, till it shall please the Government to call thy people out for punishment—children and fools that ye be! Count your dead, and be still. Rest assured that the Government will send you a *man*!'

"'Ay,' returned Khoda Dad Khan, 'for we also be men.'

"As he looked Tallantire between the eyes, he added, 'And by God, Sahib, may thou be that man!'"

And the attitude of Orde and Tallantire towards

their border tribe is precisely that of the subaltern towards the men under his command. A subaltern in cholera camp arranges sing-songs and general diversions for the men to keep their minds employed. Cottar, the Brushwood Boy, is sent off to a lonely post with a small detachment. "There was nothing to do, and the men got drunk, gambled, and quarrelled. They were a sickly crew, for a junior subaltern is by custom saddled with the worst men. Cottar endured their rioting as long as he could, and then sent down country for a dozen pairs of boxing-gloves. . . . He invited his men to other sports, such as racing across country in shirt and trousers after a trail of torn paper, and to singlestick in the evenings, till the native population, who had a lust for sport in every form, wished to know whether the white men understood wrestling. They sent in an ambassador, who took the soldiers by the neck and threw them about the dust; and the entire command were all for this new game. . . . That detachment, who had gone up in bullock-carts, returned to headquarters at an average rate of thirty miles a day, fair heel-and-toe, no sick, no prisoners, and no court-martials pending. They scattered themselves among their friends, singing the praises of their lieutenant and looking for causes of offence." Cottar himself con-

siders all this "rather a lark," and is pleased when he is given a new detachment to deal with in the same way.

It is interesting here to consider Cottar's antecedents. Of all Kipling's men, he might fairly be supposed to be the least fitted for action, having a world of his own in dreams. But "ten years at an English public school do not encourage dreaming." From a fag in the Lower Third he rises gradually to be Head of the School and Captain of the Games, head of his House, "where he and his lieutenants preserved discipline and decency among seventy boys from twelve to seventeen. . . . School was his real world, where things of vital importance happened, and crises arose that must be dealt with promptly and quietly. . . . He was glad to be back in authority when the holidays ended. Behind him, but not too near, was the wise and temperate Head . . . leading him on to see . . . how boys and men are all of a piece, and how he who can handle the one will assuredly in time control the other." Cottar himself applies this wisdom later on, in dealing with his company: "There was very little getting round him, for he seemed to know by instinct exactly when and where to head off a malingerer; but he did not forget that the difference between a dazed and sulky junior of the upper

school and a bewildered, browbeaten lump of a private fresh from the depot was very small indeed."

This common training of the schools affords in great measure a key to the character of Kipling's men. The prefect regards his position as one of responsibility rather than of privilege. He is more concerned to inculcate and maintain "discipline and decency" among his juniors than to use them as fags for his convenience. This is the principle which distinguishes the English method of colonisation from most others; it is cultivation as opposed to exploitation. The schoolboy learns to play for his side, not for himself; his private and personal interests are constantly being subordinated to those of his House, or of the School. He is not encouraged to dwell on his emotions, but rather to keep fit, and devote his attention to the work in hand. Excuses are not favourably received; instead of the democratic principle of suiting standards to the capacity or convenience of the weakest or least willing, we have the aristocratic principle which requires a man to do his very best, even under adverse conditions.

Behind all this training there lies, of course, a certain amount of hereditary instinct; the raw material is to some extent adapted to the treat-

ment it receives. But the training counts for much. The sheltered life system does not fit a man for the task of dealing with men ("Thrown Away"). On the other hand, it requires something more than the mere acquirement of external characteristics, the public school mark, the public school tone, to make the finished product. Kipling is generally little concerned with these externals. In the brief record of the Brushwood Boy's school life, he shows us the essentials which go to the building of such characters as he chiefly portrays. He is also precise as to the quality of the raw material, and the sources from which it is derived. His young men are drawn from the upper middle classes, or sons of the landed gentry, with the hereditary instinct of leading and governing on the principle of responsibility for the guidance of those under them. And their training is that of the English public school, where the same principle is constantly inculcated and applied.

III

COTTAR, the "Brushwood Boy," is by way of being rather an exemplary young man. Stalky & Co., the heroes of Kipling's school stories, are not exemplary at all. "There was nothing in their characters, as known to Mr. Prout, their house-master, at all commanding respect, nor did Foxy, the subtle, red-haired school sergeant, trust them." Yet the author throughout upholds them, and takes their part.

Stalky & Co. was not well received by the pedagogues. The book was revolutionary, calculated to produce a dangerous effect upon the young. Boys constantly at feud with the masters, and the masters generally discomfited—obviously it was not the sort of thing which the "master" mind could be expected to approve.

In justice to the author, it must be admitted that the boys are not allowed to triumph overmuch; ὕβρις, the defiance of accepted limitations, is punished by the intervention of the higher power.

Stalky and his companions are not types of the

public school boy at all, but exceptions. The masters consider the three as a unit apart from the rest; the Head himself deals with them as variations from the normal. True, the author believes that Stalky, at least, is by no means unique; India, he declares, is "full of Stalkies—Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps—that we don't know anything about."

Be this as it may, there is much in the book which serves to throw light on the ethics and general character of Kipling's men.

In the first episode, "In Ambush" (the first in the book), the three are brought up before their house-master and Mr. King after their excursion to Col. Dabney's. King refuses to believe the story of the badger, and on learning that the badger can be produced in evidence, shows signs of losing his temper. This is just what the boys have been waiting for, and they rise to the occasion. "They had settled into their stride now. Their eyes ceased to sparkle; their faces were blank; their hands hung beside them without a twitch. They were learning, at the expense of a fellow-countryman, the lesson of their race, which is to put away all emotion and entrap the alien at the proper time."

It is precisely this idea which Kipling has in

mind when he bids the world "beware my country when my country grows polite."

A curious instance of this practice of self-restraint, taken as a kind of sport, is shown in Stalky's gratuitous addition to the drill-book of the shortlived school cadet-corps ("The Flag of their Country").

"Stalky laid aside his Snider, and, drawing a long breath, favoured the company with a blast of withering invective.

"'"'Old 'ard, Muster Corkran. That ain't in any drill,' cried Foxy.

"'"All right, sergeant. You never know what you may have to say to your men.—For pity's sake, try to stand up without leanin' against each other, you blear-eyed, herrin'-gutted guttersnipes. . . . There's a rear rank man lookin' as though his belly were in the pawnshop. Yes, you, Private Ansell.' And Stalky tongue-lashed the victim for three minutes, in gross and in detail.

"'"Hullo!' He returned to his normal tone. 'First blood to me. You flushed, Ansell. You wriggled.'

"'"Couldn't help flushing,' was the answer. 'Don't think I wriggled, though.'

"'"Well, it's your turn now.' Stalky resumed his place in the ranks. . . .

"Ansell, too, had been blessed with relatives in the service, and slowly, in a lazy drawl—his style was more reflective than Stalky's—descended the abysmal depths of personality.

"'Blood to me!' he shouted triumphantly. 'You couldn't stand it either.' Stalky was a rich red, and his Snider shook visibly.

"'I didn't think I would,' he said, struggling for composure, 'but after a bit I got in no end of a bait. Curious, ain't it?'

"'Good for the temper,' said the slow-moving Hogan, as they returned arms to the rack."

The motives which induce these boys to go in for the cadet-corps business at all are worth noting. It will save them a lot of time at Sandhurst; they are ready enough to learn their drill, but they decline to "ass about the country with a toy Snider." They drill behind closed doors, and the sergeant is made to promise that he will not take them out into the open till they want to go. "'I knew you'd make a sort of extra-tu. of it, you cold-blooded beast,' said M'Turk. 'Don't you want to die for your giddy country?'

"'Not if I can jolly well avoid it,' answered Stalky."

Similarly, the zeal with which they practise

keeping their temper, studying to endure abuse without "getting in a bait," is due, not to any exalted moral fervour—it is not their way to turn the other cheek—but to a calculating ambition towards general fitness; for the advantage it brings. It is on a par with cold baths and physical exercise.

The attitude of Number Five towards the expression of lofty motives generally is cynical. "Unboylike, abnormal . . . unsound," is Mr. Prout's verdict. "Utterly soulless young devils," says a mathematical master. Certainly, the three have no respect for the type of youth depicted in *Eric* and *St. Winifred's*. But one may safely say that the average English schoolboy agrees with them in this. The boy who reads even *Tom Brown's Schooldays* finds the extreme saintliness of Arthur a little trying, to say the least. When the Padre invites his own Tenth Legion to look after young Clewer, Beetle votes for making the youngster a study fag. "'No,' said M'Turk firmly; 'we ain't going to have any beastly Erickin'. D'you want to walk about with your arm round his neck?' And Beetle hastens to find a practical excuse for his suggestion. 'He'd clean out the jam-pots, anyhow; an' the burnt porridge sauce-pan. . . .'" Ultimately, Clewer is delivered, with

no heroics, but by most effective jesting with his oppressors.

The trouble with books — and boys — of the *Eric* type is a certain loudness of utterance, a dwelling at length and openly on things which should be touched very lightly, or kept apart. Literally speaking, they hurt one's feelings. And one is driven to ridicule in self-defence. With *Eric* and *Tom Brown* in mind, it is interesting to mark one brief passage in the chapter of *Stalky*, entitled "A Little Prep." Crandall — Crandall minor that was: Lt. R. Crandall of an ordinary Indian Regiment—down for the Old Boys' match, has been allotted a bed in his old dormitory, and turns in early. Stalky has asked him, earlier in the day, to tell the story of the frontier fight in which he was wounded. And the boys are waiting expectantly.

"It needed a few minutes to put them at their ease, and, in some way they could not understand, they were more easy when Crandall turned round and said his prayers—a ceremony he had neglected for some years."

There is something fine in this. One hardly knows how to express it without oneself being guilty of "Ericking." It is unobtrusive; the finest touches in Kipling's work are often so. Even to

quote the passage seems somehow almost indelicate, as underlining something not meant to be emphasised. But it is there, and the pedagogues who find *Stalky* an undesirable book can make of it what they please.

"To put away all emotion" is, we are told, the lesson of the race. It is not only race, but more particularly class, which shudders at the emotionalism of Raymond Martin, M.P. He too is a fellow-countryman—in the narrower, literal sense. But his attitude towards the things of which he speaks is that of another sphere. The magnetic sympathy of social equality, the freemasonry of caste which appears, for instance, in M'Turk's interview with Col. Dabney ("the landed man speaking to his equal; deep calling to deep"), is wanting here. Mr. Raymond Martin, a patriotic Briton, and Major in a Volunteer regiment, is nevertheless an alien in this environment, and the fact makes itself painfully evident from the start.

"He had no knowledge of the school—its traditions or heritage. He did not know . . . that eighty per cent. of the boys had been born abroad—in camp, cantonment, or upon the high seas, or that seventy-five per cent. were sons of fathers in one or other of the services . . . looking to follow their fathers' profession. The Head might have told him this,

and much more; but, after an hour-long dinner in his company, the Head had decided to say nothing whatever. Mr. Raymond Martin seemed to know so much already."

Consequently, he speaks to the boys of the "fair fame of their glorious native land," of "leading their men against the bullets of England's foes," and "confronting the stricken field in all the pride of their youthful manhood."

"Now the reserve of a boy is tenfold deeper than the reserve of a maid, she being made for one end only by blind Nature, but man for several. With a large and healthy hand, he tore down these veils, and trampled them under the well-intentioned feet of eloquence. In a raucous voice he cried aloud little matters, like the hope of Honour and the dream of Glory, that boys do not discuss even with their most intimate equals; cheerfully assuming that, till he spoke, they had never considered these possibilities. He pointed them to shining goals, with fingers which smudged out all radiance on all horizons. He profaned the most secret places of their souls with outcries and gesticulations . . . and they looked all ways in their extreme discomfort.

"Their years forbade them even to shape their thoughts clearly to themselves . . . they sat,

flushed and uneasy, in sour disgust. After many, many words, he reached for the cloth-wrapped stick and thrust one hand in his bosom. This—this was the concrete symbol of their land—worthy of all honour and reverence! Let no boy look on this flag who did not purpose to worthily add to its imperishable lustre. He shook it before them—a large calico Union Jack, staring in all three colours, and waited for the thunder of applause that should crown his effort.

"They looked in silence. They had certainly seen the thing before. . . . But the College never displayed it; it was no part of the scheme of their lives; the Head had never alluded to it; their fathers had not declared it unto them. It was a matter shut up, sacred and apart. What, in the name of everything caddish, was he driving at, who waved that horror before their eyes? . . .

"The volunteer cadet-corps fell in next Monday, depressedly, with a face of shame. Even then, judicious silence might have turned the corner." But Foxy, the school sergeant, cannot be expected to understand this. And a few minutes later, after an astonishing outburst, and vain attempts at dissimulation before M'Turk and Beetle, Stalky explains that the cadet-corps is "broke up—

disbanded—dead—putrid—corrupt—stinkin'. . . . Oh yes, an' I'm goin' to be reported to the Head for swearin'."

Thus curiously does Stalky respond to the eloquence of Mr. Raymond Martin. And his attitude is typical. The music-hall mixture of sentiment and Jingoism—the peroration, it will be remembered, was subsequently used with overwhelming success at a meeting of electors—produces here an unlooked-for effect.

It is interesting then to compare the attitude of this same Stalky and of the school, in respect of these little matters, towards one of their own, where there are no outsiders about.

"'Hullo, Foxibus, who are you in mournin' for?' There was a broad band of crape round Foxy's arm.

"'He was in my old regiment,' said Foxy, jerking his head towards the notices, where a newspaper cutting was thumb-tacked between call-over lists.

"'By Gum,' quoth Stalky, uncovering as he read. 'It's old Duncan—Fat-Sow Duncan—killed on duty at something or other Kotal. "*Rallyin' his men with conspicuous gallantry.*" He would, of course. "*The body was recovered.*" That's all right. They cut 'em up sometimes, don't they, Foxy?'

"'Horrid,' said the sergeant briefly.

"'Poor old Fat-Sow! I was a fag when he left. How many does that make to us, Foxy?'

"'Mr. Duncan, he is the ninth. He came here when he was no bigger than little Grey tertius. My old regiment, too. Yiss, nine to us, Mr. Corkran, up to date.'

"The boys went out into the wet, walking swiftly.

"'Wonder how it feels—to be shot and all that,' said Stalky, as they splashed down a lane. 'Where did it happen, Beetle?'

"'Oh, out in India somewhere. We're always rowing there. But look here, Stalky. . . .'" And the boys fall to discussing their plans for the afternoon's entertainment.

Later, the Head comes into Flint's study, to talk over games *versus* extra-tu., and casually mentions that Crandall is coming down with the Old Boys.

"'I don't know whether he'll be much use, though. He was rather knocked about, recovering poor old Duncan's body.'

"'Crandall major—the Gunner?' Perowne asked.

"'No, the minor—"Toffee" Crandall—in a Native Indian regiment. He was almost before your time, Perowne.'

"'The papers didn't say anything about him.

We read about Fat-Sow, of course. What's Crandall done, sir?'

"'I've brought over an Indian paper that his mother sent me. It was rather a—hefty, I think you say—piece of work. Shall I read it?'

"The Head knew how to read. When he had finished the quarter-column of small type everybody thanked him politely.

"'Good for the old Coll.!' said Perowne. 'Pity he wasn't in time to save Fat-Sow, though. That's nine to us, isn't it, in the last three years?'

"'Yes. . . . And I took old Duncan off all games for extra-tu. five years ago this term,' said the Head. 'By the way, who do you hand over the games to, Flint?' . . ."

Crandall arrives in due course, and is cheered along the whole front of the College. . . . "'What d'you take any notice of those rotters for?' said Stalky, playing substitute for the Old Boys. . . . 'I talked to *him* up in the dormitory when he was changin'. Pulled his sweater down for him. He's cut about all over the arms—horrid purply ones. He's goin' to tell us about it to-night. I asked him to when I was lacin' his boots.'

"'Well, you *have* got cheek,' said Beetle enviously.

"'Slipped out before I thought. But he wasn't

a bit angry. He's no end of a chap. I swear I'm goin' to play up like beans. Tell Turkey!'"

The author carefully refrains from any emphasis of the fact that Stalky—who is a Great Man, and a match for prefects, Prouts and Kings—here laces Crandall's boots. It is smuggled in, as it were, in a subordinate clause. Again, one hardly likes to draw attention to the point, lest one should be accused of spiritual relationship with Raymond Martin. The fact is there, but it is very quietly put. And there are other details of like significance that one must needs refrain from underlining. We have here once more that unobtrusive, almost stealthy insertion of something essential, something great in itself, as if half wishing it to pass unnoticed, or at least unnoticed by the crowd; something written, so to speak, that he who runs may fail to read. Gems of descriptive work, too, of observation or of insight, are often slipped in casually, with the aristocratic carelessness of a writer naturally rich, who does not seek to draw attention to his wealth. He will coin a word, such as "lesson-memory," for instance, and use it without explanation, as if the idea, and the vital distinction it implies, were something generally known and realised, instead of a discovery. But the reticence is most noticeable—and in its avoidance of notice

most significant—where questions of feeling are concerned. The irreverent attitude of the boys towards *Eric* and Raymond Martin is shown with emphasis; the author seems determined to maintain for them the character of "utterly soulless young devils." But little matters such as the trifle which sets the boys at their ease with Crandall, or Stalky's incidental valeting, are set down with no emphasis at all.

And the effect of sincerity is not lessened by the fact that the dominant note of the book is one of mirth, of humour. Kipling knows the value of laughter; he has written hymns to the angels who make men laugh. The theme of laughter, like the theme of work, is one that invariably "draws" him — betrays him into characteristic utterance — as often as it occurs. "Brugglesmith" and "The Puzzler" are classics of mirth; the Pyecroft stories give one an ache behind the ears; like eating ices in a hurry. And after one or two tentative lashings out at magistrates that persecute poor motorists, Mr. Kipling has taken vengeance—vengeance enough to satisfy all the motorists ever fined—in laughter. ("The Village that voted the Earth was flat." In *A Diversity of Creatures.*)

"Not the least good having a row with a master

unless you can make an ass of him," says Stalky. And the three contrive to make asses of their enemies—Foxy, King and Prout together; King and Prout separately; Mason, Tulke—most effectively. Their work as moral reformers ends with the patchwork shaving of a bully—half one side, half the other. But it is worth noting that Sefton is finally allowed to shave clean before appearing in public. "Horrid bad for the fags if they saw him." Foxy's defeat in the poaching affair is "much too good to tell all the other brutes in the Coll." And in the matter of Tulke's disgustful amours, when the troubled Sixth beg them not to noise the story abroad ("fellows as senior as you are can easily see why"), they agree to refrain. They have no reverence for "clever little swots"—Tulke's position is not unlike that of the Babu in "The Head of the District"—but they will not deliver up a prefect to the scorn of the Lower School.

There is a rough but very sound loyalty in this; a conception of being enemies on one point, yet allies against all outsiders. Col. Dabney regards boys as trespassers, and a nuisance, yet the moment one of them appeals to him as a fellow-landowner, he acknowledges the community of interest. Number Five Study itself maintains its

unity of front towards the rest of the world by the same principle. "'It's two to one,' said Stalky warningly, and Beetle closed the book, in obedience to the law under which he and his companions had lived for six checkered years." M'Turk has been kicked out of his Irish dialect, and is not allowed to sing "The Wearing of the Green." And again, though Number Five Study hold themselves as a rule rather aloof from the rest of the school, this does not prevent Stalky's companions at defaulters' drill from backing him loyally when General Collinson appears on the scene, and the least hitch might cause disaster in the presence of a stranger.

"Children of noble races, trained by surrounding art," quotes M'Turk—more aptly, perhaps, than he knows. There are two factors—the raw material and the process. The nature of the raw material is carefully pointed out in "The Flag of their Country"; the process is seen at work throughout the book. It is the cumulative action of generation upon generation, in the apostolic succession of the public school. "Boys educate each other," says the Padre, "more than we can or dare."

And behind the education of boys by boys, there is, as in "The Brushwood Boy," a power in reserve: the wise and temperate Head. The great vindi-

cation of *Stalky* from the moral point of view lies in the character of the Head, in the author's tribute to that character, and in his showing of its influence upon the boys.

The masters generally dislike Stalky & Co.—largely because they find themselves unable to deal with them effectively. The Head, on the other hand, is more than a match for them, and can afford to appreciate them. He pays them the compliment of dealing with them as variations from the normal, and his methods are highly unconventional. After the hutting and trespass episode, he lends them books which "smell of tobacco rather," and will hardly take any harm from being read in the open. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to execute the technically innocent "without rhyme, Beetle, or reason." The treatment meted out to the Impressionists, and their reception of the same, are characteristic of both parties.

"Once more they stood in the presence of the Head—Belial, Mammon, and Lucifer. But they had to deal with a man more subtle than them all. Mr. Prout had talked to him, heavily and sadly, for half an hour; and the Head had seen all that was hidden from his house-master.

"'You've been bothering Mr. Prout,' he said

pensively. 'House-masters aren't here to be bothered by boys more than is necessary. I don't like being bothered by these things. You are bothering *me*. That is a very serious offence. You see it?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Well, now, I purpose to bother you, on personal and private grounds, because you have broken into my time. . . .' And bothered they are accordingly.

"'Among the—lower classes this would lay me open to a charge of—assault. You should be more grateful for your—privileges than you are. . . . There's a certain flagrant injustice about this that ought to appeal to—your temperament. . . .'

"'But look here,' says Beetle afterwards, 'why aren't we wrathy with the Head? He said it was a flagrant injustice. So it is.'

"'Dearr man,' said M'Turk, and vouchsafed no further answer.

"It was Stalky who laughed till he had to hold on by the edge of a basin.

"'You *are* a funny ass. What's that for?' said Beetle.

"'I'm—I'm thinking of the flagrant injustice of it!'"

The Head knows when to intervene and when

to refrain; only a very strong and understanding man could go to such arbitrary extremes without weakening his authority, And only, as the Head himself points out, with boys who will understand him. He can wink—he is reported to have winked—at the audience after their very enjoyable evening with Mr. Raymond Martin — it is the attitude of von Lennaert "pretending to soothe down His Excellency's topknot in dumbshow in the background" when Stalky is being wigged by the Viceroy for his triangulations in the hills ("Slaves of the Lamp, II.").

It is an aristocratic power which is content to intervene only on great occasions, and a healthy polity which only rarely needs such intervention. In "The Last Term" we are shown a degenerate Sixth, with a particularly weak representative in the person of Tulke. "Tulke had called three prefects' meetings in two terms, till the Head had informed the Sixth that they were expected to maintain discipline without the recurrent menace of his authority." When the Head returns after some days' absence ("A Little Prep."), he finds the school "a little relaxed under Mr. King's viceroyalty." Mr. King had been worrying the Sixth—in this case a Sixth of a different sort, not to be handled without gloves. And there is a certain disposition

to rebel. Perowne complains that King has "called the prefects names enough to justify a first-class row. Crammers' rejections, ill-regulated hobbledehoys, wasn't it? Now it's impossible for prefects . . .

"'Rot,' said Flint. 'King's the best classical cram we've got; and it isn't fair to bother the Head with a row. He's up to his eyes with extra-tu. and Army work as it is. . . .'"

". . . It might have been because he felt the air was a little thunderous that the Head took his after-dinner cheroot to Flint's study. . . ." He makes no reference, however, to any signs of unrest, but talks easily and informally on matters of interest. He declines to interfere even by a suggestion in the matter of appointing a new Head of the Games.

"'And that's the man,' said Flint, when the door shut, 'that you want to bother with a dames' school row.'" Whereat Perowne hastily disclaims any such intention.

Stalky, it will be remembered, was dedicated to the Headmaster of a certain school. And in the verses "Let us now praise famous men" we are shown some of the precepts in those men's teaching. As, for instance, how that

> "Man must finish off his work,
> Right or wrong, his daily work,
> And without excuses."

It is an aristocratic principle to accept without question the task of making bricks without straw. And there is a sense of race and caste as something superior to the individual in the men who

> "put away to-day,
> All the joys of their to-day
> And with toil of their to-day
> Bought for us to-morrow."[1]

The men who can be

> "Set to serve the lands they rule
> (Save he serve no man may rule),
> Serve and love the lands they rule,"

are found most naturally among "children of noble races," trained not only by the influence of their fellows, but by guidance of men of their own class.

Among these it is pleasant now to be able to include Mr. King, who does not appear to advantage in *Stalky*, though his value as a classical cram is acknowledged even there. In the story of "Regulus" (*A Diversity of Creatures*) the author pays generous tribute to his memory. King is here thoroughly, remarkably human; he gives us, so to speak, the "essential guts" of what he teaches. It is an enviable fortune to have

[1] The two themes are later combined in the unspeakably poignant verses to "The Children" in *A Diversity of Creatures*.

studied the classics under a man who can render *scilicet* as "Will he, by Gum!" and describe Carthage as a "sort of God-forsaken nigger Manchester." The master's views on several points fall excellently into alignment with Kipling's own. His talk, for instance, of "evil-minded, commercial Carthage, and of the democracy eternally futile in all ages and climes"; his discourse on "manners, morals, and respect for authority" from the text, "*Dis te minorem quod geris imperas*"—one would like to have heard it all.

Altogether, this book of the doings of ingeniously mischievous boys is filled through with the evidences of a high moral code, based on the principles of discipline, responsibility, self-respect, and self-restraint—principles essentially aristocratic, as they are essentially English.

IV

THE highest form of government is that which can safely allow the greatest latitude of freedom to the individual. And individual responsibility increases as this freedom is increased. The fag is developed into the prefect; the head of the school into a potential Head of the District. The aim of all discipline is to reduce, by gradual stages, the necessity for close supervision, until, the child grown man, it is safe to burn the rod—or to deliver it into the hands of the new generation. Cottar, as Adjutant, stands in much the same relation to his Colonel as in earlier days to his Headmaster. In "The Flag of their Country," the members of the cadet-corps take command by turns; in "The Army of a Dream," where Kipling pictures a military ideal, any man can apply to be put on probation in the rank next above his own, and the Guards—the élite—have no corporals, it being considered superfluous for one to teach another how to keep himself clean.

In all art there is, or should be, a certain individuality, a determining point of view; the

artist emphasises that particular feature which most appeals to him. In the present age, much has been said against the public school system, but that it does afford a valuable training is beyond doubt, though it may be a matter of question whether the values Kipling sees and emphasises are so predominant and so essential as he makes them appear; whether they may not be outweighed by loss in other directions. It is the same with the Army. Kipling shows us here a parallel to the training of the public schools. The discipline of the regiment is, in his view, a desirable and effective means of turning out good men. And the process relies, here also, largely on the influence of those who have themselves been subjected to it. "We've got to lick you into shape," says Ortheris to the recruits of the new draft. "Don't you go thinkin' it's the Colonel nor yet the Company orf'cer that makes you. It's *us*, you Johnnie Raws. . . ."

The similarity between school and regiment is pointed out upon more than one occasion. Cottar, as we have seen, recognised the resemblance. It is noted, also, in "His Private Honour." "There is no scorn so complete as that of the old soldier for the new. It is right that this should be so. A recruit must learn first that he is not a man but a thing,

which in time, and by the mercy of Heaven, may develop into a soldier of the Queen if it takes care and attends to good advice. Ortheris's tunic was open, his cap overlopped one eye, and his hands were behind his back as he walked round, growing more contemptuous at every step. The recruits did not dare to answer, for they were new boys in a strange school, who had called themselves soldiers at the Depot in comfortable England." The madness of Private Ortheris, suddenly wishful to desert, and his humble submission afterwards to punishment by Mulvaney are curiously like 'Pater' Winton's unaccountable Berserkergang and subsequent execution by Mullins, who shares his study ("Regulus").

It is a leading principle, in the regiment as in the schools, that the individual must subordinate himself to the community. From this first stage, he advances to be one of those who are set to influence others in the same direction, either by official promotion, or through the mere fact of being an old hand. And the process makes for self-respect. Kipling's maxims for the young recruit, expressed in some very well-known verses, point toward the same end. From the elementary injunctions regarding cleanliness and willingness, to the final, "Go to your Gawd like a soldier," the

fundamental idea is that of a self-respect attained, not by self-assertion, but by subservience to something recognised as taking precedence of self. "My right!" says Ortheris with scorn, when it is suggested that he might have procured the dismissal from the Service of the officer who struck him on parade, "My right! I ain't a recruit, to go whinin' about my rights to this an' my rights to that."

It is a gratifying picture which Kipling gives of the two sides of regimental life—that of the mess and that of the rank and file—in "His Private Honour." One hopes that it may be—or wishes that it were still—true to life. The two systems, or orders of society, that represented by the public school class, and that from which the rank and file of the voluntarily enlisted army were chiefly drawn, are interdependent. Each has its duty toward the other. And in Kipling's soldier stories, these duties are faithfully observed on both sides. It is not here that he finds, when he does find, the symptoms of decay. The Irish-American agitator who confidently undertakes to raise disaffection in an Irish regiment ("The Mutiny of the Mavericks") finds himself distressingly in error.

The same principles of discipline which obtain in a regiment, or at a public school, are applied by

Kipling when dealing with animals and things. His polo ponies (in "The Maltese Cat") encourage one another to "play the game," and are influenced thereto by a kind of hero-worship for their masters —much as Stalky swears he will "play up like beans" after his interview with Crandall. Rikki Tikki and The White Seal are guided by instinct to do what amounts to their daily work—and without excuses. The horses on an American farm deal with the apostle of obstruction ("A Walking Delegate") on similar lines to those followed by the men in "The Mutiny of the Mavericks." The story of the "Ship that found Herself" is a parable of discipline; the story of the railway engine 007 is an epitome of education. Boy or man, beast or machine, the characters in Kipling's works are guided by like principles—principles essentially English, and associated with a system based on mutual respect, mutual reliance, and recognition of responsibility, between leaders and led. The verdict of the narrator upon the settlement arrived at between Ortheris and Lt. Ouless is that "both sides deserve great credit." The same may be said of the two sides in Kipling's social world.

To the man in the street, it may seem that this is an ideal state of things; that the author, despite

his realism and verisimilitude of detail, yet sees things as he would wish them to be rather than as they are. His characters, livingly human though they be, and differentiated as the faces in a gathering of many ranks and nations, are nevertheless of a type; varying in externals, yet inwardly modelled upon certain ideals of conduct which are the author's own, upholding a scheme of things which seems to him the best on earth.

V

THERE is a class of men whom Kipling treats with unconcealed scorn, as outsiders, having no legitimate place in his feudal scheme. An early specimen is Pagett, M.P., who refers to the heat of India as the "Asian solar myth." Such a man, travelling for pleasure in a country where his fellow-men work under far from pleasurable conditions, is naturally not well received; they regard him much as the North Sea fisherman might regard the tripper who hires his boat for the afternoon, and scoffs at the "perils of the deep" until he begins to feel sea-sick. Pagett comes and goes, a harmless creature after all. Another of these outsiders appears as "A Friend's Friend," but compasses no very serious mischief beyond getting drunk and behaving disreputably at a dance. Raymond Martin is a very innocuous person; he may even—at a meeting of electors—be of some service to the State.

A more virulent type is the Member for Lower Tooting, who makes political copy out of his observations—warped rather than extended—on

an Indian tour. Thus, in "Without Benefit of Clergy," we read of him "wandering about India in top-hat and frock-coat," talking largely about the "benefits of British rule," and suggesting as the one thing needful "the establishment of a duly qualified electoral system and a general bestowal of the franchise. His long-suffering hosts smiled and made him welcome, and when he paused to admire, with pretty words, the blossom of the blood-red *dhak*-tree that had flowered untimely for a sign of what was coming, they smiled more than ever." He is scared by the cholera, and is reported to be going home. Whereat someone suggests that it might be well if he were knocked over. "It might keep a few vestrymen of his kidney to their own parish." In another story, "At the End of the Passage," we are given an extract from a speech by "one of those vestrymen that call themselves M.P.'s," to the effect that "the civil service in India is the preserve—the pet preserve—of the aristocracy of England. What does the democracy—what do the masses—get from that country, which we have step by step fraudulently annexed? I answer, nothing whatever. It is farmed with a single eye to their own interests by the scions of the aristocracy. They take good care to maintain

their lavish scale of incomes, to avoid or stifle any inquiries into the nature and conduct of their administration, while they themselves force the unhappy peasant to pay with the sweat of his brow for all the luxuries in which they are lapped." The men on the spot are not altogether in sympathy with these ideas. And the experiment of the Very Greatest of All the Viceroys, in appointing "a child of the country to the rule of the country"—a Bengali, be it noted, to the rule of the proud and turbulent province of Kot-Kumharsen—turns out a costly failure.

In "Little Foxes" we are shown the enlightened, enlightening M.P. full-blown and in action. Certain lands of Ethiopia, watered by the river Gihon, are being very successfully governed on the lines of an English fox-hunting country, the natives entering thoroughly into the spirit of the game. The Gihon Hunt becomes an institution, inseparably one with the administration of the land. Unfortunately, this happy state of things is not allowed to last.

"This same Modern Progress which brought dog-biscuit and brass water-taps to the kennels was at work all over the world. Forces, Activities, and Movements sprang into being, agitated themselves, coalesced, and, in one political avalanche, overwhelmed a bewildered, and not in the least

intending it, England." (The un-in-one-breath-utterable adjective is perhaps a reminiscence of one of those "ancient dramatists" for whose acquaintance Beetle was indebted to the Head.) "The echoes of the New Era were borne into the Province on the wings of inexplicable cables. The Gihon Hunt read speeches and sentiments, and policies which amazed them, and they thanked God, prematurely, that their Province was too far off, too hot, and too hard-worked to be reached by those speakers or their policies. But they, with others, underestimated the scope and purpose of the New Era."

"One by one, the Provinces of the Empire were hauled up and baited, hit and held, lashed under the belly, and forced back on their haunches for the amusement of their new masters in the parish of Westminster. One by one they fell away, sore and angry, to compare stripes with each other at the ends of the uneasy earth." The Gihon Hunt, too, has its particular visitation. A Mr. Lethabie Groombride—introduced earlier in the story as "a large, clean-shaven man—not an M.F.H."—has been gloriously "drawn" by an Inspector at home on leave, with regard to certain ceremonial beatings of the natives—much as the too credulous Mr. Mason is "drawn" by Stalky & Co. with a

tale of theft. Mr. Groombride has now formed a committee, and is disseminating literature, in the form of pamphlets "signed by a lady secretary," and recommending the ill-treated natives "to institute criminal proceedings against the Governor, and, as soon as might be, to rise against English oppression and tyranny."

"The Inspector read the last half page. 'But—but,' he stammered. 'This is impossible. White men don't write this sort of stuff.'

"'Don't they, just,' said the Governor. 'They get made Cabinet Ministers for doing it too. I went home last year. I know.'"

The poor, misguided natives evince no inclination to rise against their brutal oppressors. They appreciate the parallel drawn by the Inspector: "It is with men as it is with dogs. God afflicts some with a madness. It is no fault of ours if such men run about in the sun and froth at the mouth." And they answer to the Governor's appeal: "O Sheikhs and men, have we ridden together and walked puppies together, and bought and sold barley for the horses—that after these years we should run riot on the scent of a madman—an afflicted of God?"

The entry of Mr. Groombride is not unlike that of Raymond Martin. "He passed up the gang

plank to the village, and with no more prelude than a Salvation Army picket in a Portsmouth slum, cried, 'Oh, my brothers!'" Like Raymond Martin, too, he is a man "without form and void . . . but desperately earnest." He is filled with an all-embracing loving-kindness towards the oppressed. "'Tell them—oh, tell the poor serfs not to be afraid of me. Tell them I come to redress their wrongs. If they only knew how I felt towards them in my heart! If I could express a tithe of my feelings!'"

And the fate of this earnest man is ridicule, comprehensive and annihilating; it is vengeance taken in lordly wise. Technically, his downfall is brought about by the carefully prearranged accident of the Inspector's tampering with an interpretation, and the dramatic machinations of Abdul and Farag. The Inspector had meant to undeceive him, but somehow forgot. (One remembers how the Head refrained from enlightening Mr. Raymond Martin.) These, however, are but mechanical means to an end. Behind them we discern, in the author's mind, a firmly-seated God, able to rout Lilliputian rebels with laughter alone, a sane and healthy deity, like Henley's "God in the Garden," watching with mirth and wonder the reformer who would destroy the well-contrasted

beauty of His creation; the excellent diversity of His creatures.

Lethabie Groombride is the servant of Demah-Kerazi, a devil inhabiting crowds and assemblies. One remembers Mr. King's indictment of the democracy "eternally futile in all ages." Rulers and ruled, captain and soldier, landowner and peasant—the distinction has existed throughout all history. And the world's best days have ever been those in which it was recognised unshrinkingly.

So also with the distinction between man and woman; the world has been at its best where the sexes were each cleanly and naturally itself toward the other. Kipling has no respect for either aping the manner of its opposite. As far back as *The Light that Failed* we find scornful reference to "epicene young pagans," who "talked of Art, and the state of their souls." In "One View of the Question," where Shafiz Ullah Khan writes of the town of London as he sees it, there is a "high-voiced woman" who speaks openly to him, in the presence of other men, about the control of the zenanas.

"Then I—'hast thou ever felt the life stir under thy heart or laid a little son between thy breasts, O most unhappy?' Thereto she hotly, with a

haggard eye—'No, for I am a free woman, and no servant of babes.' Then I softly—'God deal lightly with thee, my sister, for thou art in heavier bondage than any slave, and the fuller half of the earth is hidden from thee.'" And in "My Son's Wife," there is a quietly scathing picture of enlightened degenerates suffering from the disease of the century, regarding marriage as a base convention, and seeking "self-expression" in other ways. One of their incidental hobbies is the reformation of society.

In "The Mother Hive," the progress of social reform is shown in merciless detail. And one of the most potent factors is a certain emotionalism, the hysterical exaggeration or perversion of feeling. The Wax Moth makes her entry into the hive in an opportune moment, at a time when the stock is old and overcrowded, and everyone is suffering slightly from nerves. Her first step is to ingratiate herself with a youngster who has just been abused by the Guard. Melissa herself takes it coolly, or at least makes light of it the moment a stranger refers to the incident. But the Wax Moth is incensed at such oppression, and makes further advances. "'Don't call me Miss. I'm a sister to all in affliction, just a working sister. My heart bled for you beneath your burden.'" It is the

voice of Lethabie Groombride declaring his love for the villagers on the banks of Gihon.

The Wax Moth goes about her work with fondlings and endearments. They are not appreciated by the sounder stock—"'Don't cuddle so,'" says Melissa—but attract the weaker elements, who go about calling each other "ducky" and "darling," as it might be epicene young pagans talking of Art and the state of their souls. "Oddities" appear in increasing numbers, and the normal are alarmed. "How narrow of you," the Wax Moth protests. "They are all so delightfully clever and unusual and interesting. Come here, you dear, downy duck, and tell us all about your feelings." It is the æsthetes of the eighties, the too-too school of Jellaby Postlethwaite, once more.

The Wax Moth does not approve of building pillars for defence of the Gate against invasion; they are "un-English and provocative, and a waste of wax that is needed for higher and more practical ends." The workers making wax for defensive purposes are called off by irate protests from those at home, who assert that the wax makers are simply having a good time at the public expense. Thus spoke the Member for Lower Tooting, and his fellow-vestrymen.

The story is full of bitter satire; indictments

earnest and thinly veiled as any by Swift or by Voltaire. But it ends on a braver and more hopeful note. Amid the general disintegration, a little remnant of the old stock has remained unspoiled, and prepared to build up again. "When the sun rose, Veiled Figures came down, and saw their swarm at the bough's end waiting patiently within sight of the old Hive—a handful, but prepared to go on."

Kipling looks bravely and confidently to the future, believing that the things he considers best in all the world must win through. The evils, the disease, that hamper their progress, are transitory only; outbreaks of a recurrent epidemic in the history of the world. But England as he sees it, and the characters of his English men, are things that have endured and will endure. This is the essence of the "Puck" stories, wherewith he enters into full possession of his kingdom.

VI

FOR many years, through many works, enough for the production of a lifetime, Kipling was occupied mainly with scenes and subjects lying outside England. Now and again he gives us glimpses of the country as it appears to the traveller, the visitor, the man at home on leave; seen from the train in passing, or from a deserted railway station on a drowsy afternoon, or viewed with the eyes of some critic coming from other lands, in East or West. The soul of his work is insistently, superlatively English, but England itself is rarely seen.

When, at last, he turns to England wholly, it is with the intimate understanding born of privation, the greatest incentive in Art. He writes of England as blind Milton wrote of light.

Art is a cry; the utterance that relieves intolerable longing. And the measure of its greatness is the measure of desire and its restraint; of the power to see and feel and suffer, and the power so to endure, and to control expression, that

when we speak, our fellow-men are wakened to a sense of something great in us and in the life we share with them. We would live many lives, we would be gods—and being limited as men, the godlike in us turns to art as to another life, a world in which our dreams are true.

There are some little-known verses of Keats, in which the poet calls to mind the time of Robin Hood and his merry men, lamenting that they are no more to be met with in the forest glades:

> "Never one of all the clan,
> *Thrumming on an empty can. . . .*"

There is vision in this, just as there is in Kipling's portrayal of the centurion, with the long hairs of his helmet plume *rasping on his shoulder plates,* and the great shield *that never seemed to be in his way.* But the poet's attitude is negative; he mourns the limitations of our life and time, but does not here, as with the Greece whose tongue he never knew, attempt to recreate in Art what is beyond his reach in actual reality.

Kipling, too, had visions of the England of the past. And, instead of lamenting, he turns to it

joyously, and makes it live again. Familiarly, knowing neither doubt nor fear, he leads us down the byways of history, conjuring scenes and figures more near and real to us than palaces and state-surrounded kings. He has no need of these; the traces of the past are nearer to hand.

"See you the dimpled track that runs
All hollow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet.

See you our little mill that clacks
So busy by the brook?
She has ground her corn and paid her tax
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak,
And the dread ditch beside?
O that was where the Saxons broke
On the day that Harold died.

And see you, after rain, the trace
Of mound and ditch and wall?
O that was a Legion's camping-place
When Cæsar sailed from Gaul."

Pook's Hill—Puck's Hill, Beacon Hill that was Brunanburgh, Willingford that was Weland's Ford, Hobden whose fathers' father was Hob of

the Dene at the time of the Norman Conquest, the Forge that was a forge in the days of Roman Britain—touches such as these give an exalting sense of continuity; of our oneness with the past.

This age, this oldness of England, appears already in "A Matter of Fact," where we are shown the effect produced on an American landing in the country for the first time. He sees "the awful orderliness of England—line upon line, wall upon wall, solid stone dock and monolithic pier. . . ."

"'How old is that farmhouse?'

"'New. It can't be more than two hundred years at the most. . . .'

"That afternoon I walked him abroad and about, over the streets that run between the pavements like channels of grooved and tongued lava, over the bridges that are made of enduring stone, through subways floored and sided with yard-thick concrete, between houses that are never rebuilt, and by river-steps hewn, to the eyes, from the living rock. A black fog chased us into Westminster Abbey. I could hear the wings of the dead centuries circling round the head of Litchfield A. Keller, journalist of Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A., whose mission it was to make the Britishers sit up."

A similar note is struck in "An Error in the Fourth Dimension," and "An Habitation Enforced." Behind the outward evidences of modern progress there is something untouched, unalterable, the accumulation of a dominant spirit throughout centuries. The character of the land is as it was, though changes may appear on the surface.

So, too, the character of the people is the same. Sir Richard Dalyngridge steps his horse across the brook: "The great horse turned and hoisted himself into the pasture with a kick and a scramble that tore the clods down rattling.

"'Your pardon!' said Sir Richard to Dan. 'When these lands were mine, I never loved that mounted men should cross the brook except by the paved ford. But my Swallow here was thirsty, and I wished to meet you.'

"'We're very glad you've come, sir,' said Dan. 'It doesn't matter in the least about the banks.'" It is the landed man speaking to his equal, deep calling to deep, as with M'Turk and Col. Dabney. Sir Richard and the children come upon Hobden, the poacher, who has set his wires before breakfast and is now working innocently under the eyes of the keeper. "'We had the same breed in my day,'" says Sir Richard. Whistling dolorously

was a custom of the Saxons at the time of the Conquest, and bellowing was Saxon for a whisper. Gloriana knew that the Irish keep no secrets—it was true of them in her day as when Namgay Doola threatened the peace of a little Indian Hill State. Sir John Pelham prefers to deal with smuggling ironfounders by Stalky's favourite method of *oratio obliqua*—"We cannot have half Sussex hanged for a little gun-running." It is the Padre's attitude towards study cribbing and cattle raiding; the attitude of the Head towards other harmless offences.

Methods of government are the same. Sir Richard Dalyngridge has been but an hour installed in his English manor when he and his men join with the Saxons there in beating off Norman plunderers. "And I bade Hugh tell his folk that so would I deal with any man, knight or churl, Norman or Saxon, who stole as much as one egg from our valley. Said he to me, riding home: 'Thou hast gone far to conquer England this evening.' And when, after a year, De Aquila returns:

"'There is no need for thee to give any account of thy stewardship,' said he. 'I have it all from the child here.' And he told me how the young thing had stopped his tall horse at the Ford, by

waving of a branch, and crying that the way was barred. 'And if one bold, bare babe be enough to guard the Ford in these days, thou hast done well. . . .'"

We find, too, the same conflict between men on the outskirts of Empire and the bickering authorities at home. Kipling's men follow what they deem the essential task, holding themselves responsible to the essential power. De Aquila, set to guard a vulnerable point, refuses to leave his post at the command of his misguided overlord. "If *the King* calls me to leave Pevensey, which I must guard against *England's* enemies . . ."

In "The Tree of Justice" the ideal is voiced by King Henry himself:

"'If we can keep the King's peace till my son comes to rule, no man will lightly quarrel with our England.'

"'Amen,' said De Aquila. 'But the King's peace ends when the King dies.'

"'. . . I will amend that,' said the King hotly. 'I will have it so that though King, son, and grandson were all slain in one day, *still* the King's peace should hold over all England! What is a man that his mere death should upheave a people? We must have the Law.'"

This uniformity of character and principle ex-

tends not only to Saxon and Norman, but also to the Romans in Briton. Kipling's Roman centurion is the very spit and image, so to speak, of Kipling's modern subaltern. He takes his work in the same fashion, deals with his men, and with "natives," in the same way. His attitude to his father, or to his friend, his criticism or appreciation of his seniors, are those of the young Army man in the modern stories. Even his slang is of precisely the same tone.

Parnesius and Pertinax stand in much the same relation to Allo the Pict as Tallantire to Khoda Dad Khan ("The Head of the District"). Or they chaff him: "Only men without hope would risk their lives on your ponies," as it might be some young English officer speaking to Mahbub Ali.

There is trouble at home, and Parnesius' father talks pessimistically, just like the father of any young man nowadays, declaring that the country is going to the dogs. "There is no hope for Rome; she has forsaken her gods. . . ." It is the theme of the second Ode in "Regulus":

> "Delicta maiorum immeritus lues,
> Romane, donec templa refeceris. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Dis te minorem quod geris imperas. . . ."

And when the waves of that dissolution reach the outpost of Empire where the two young Captains are stationed, Parnesius has his answer ready: "It concerns us to defend the Wall, no matter what Emperor dies, or makes die." The speech is Roman; it is classic; we feel that Mr. King is justified in his contention as to the respective values of his particular subject and Hartopp's. The author, nevertheless, is careful not to hold this note and let it echo; he slips in Pertinax at once with a cynical observation about saying solemn and stupid things. Pertinax is generally set to play this part; he declares himself as belonging to the sweepings of the Empire, the men without hope—"the legion of the lost ones . . . the cohort of the damned." But he acts up to the same principles as his friend, cheerfully striving, like Tallantire and the Masters of the Gihon Hunt, to make bricks without straw; "to guard 'gainst home-born ills the Imperial fire."

Kipling's Englishmen, and Kipling's England, are of one type from the Stone Age to our day, and even beyond. The same throughout; a spirit unchanging in a land that does not change.

Sir Richard Dalyngridge walks through the

wood with the children, and they stand, looking up the valley.

"You ought to see the bluebells there in spring," says Una.

And Sir Richard, who came with Norman William into England, answers: "*I have seen.*"

VII

KIPLING'S men are alike in every age. Centurion and subaltern, tribal chief and Norman knight and modern country gentleman, are in all essentials of character the same. Wilfrid, saint of Sussex, yet withal a wise ruler of men, speaks with the voice—uses here and there the very words—of the Head in *Stalky*. By their habit of thought and principles of action, by the manner of their speech, we recognise them as belonging to one class. It might seem that the author is able to conceive only one type, or that he finds but one type worthy of consideration. Or that he believes good men in every age to have been as he depicts them. "All good families," says Parnesius, "are very much the same." Strickland's son finds in his mysterious guest ("A Deal in Cotton") a man of his own caste.

"You know what the best type of a Mohammedan gentleman can be, pater?"

"None finer—none finer," was the answer.

And the Sikh regimental chaplain and the Subadar Major judge the story told by the

younger man ("In the Presence") by the stern code of honourable tradition—much as the elders do with Adam Strickland's tale. "Theoretically, all Sikhs are equal. Practically, there are differences, as none know better than well-born, land-owning folk, or long-descended chaplains from Amritsar."

But with regard to England, the author has another explanation. In *A School History of England*, by C. R. L. Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling, there is a description of the British-born Roman which fits in well with the tenor of the three Roman stories in *Puck*. There were in Britain "country houses of rich Roman gentlemen," who "at first talked about exile, and longed to get home to Italy. But many stayed, . . . and into them too the spirit of the dear Motherland entered, and became a passion." The Norman knight falls subject to the same. "With thirty men at arms," says Sir Richard, "out of my father's house, and a new sword, I set out to conquer England. . . . I did not then know that England would conquer me."

Chapin, the American, and his wife ("An Habitation Enforced") learn gradually the history of the lands they ultimately purchase, and it seems strange to them. "The motives that swayed the

characters were beyond their comprehension; the fates that shifted them were gods they had never met . . . why—why—why did they act as they did?" And the answer is, "For the sake of the place." So the Flint Man, helplessly trying to explain what to himself seems obvious—the reason of his sacrifice.

"'It was for the sheep. The sheep are the people,' said the man in an ashamed voice. 'What else could I have done?'" . . .

"'I only made one bad break, I think,' says Chapin, after lunching with the Conants. 'I said I couldn't see why hiring land to men to farm wasn't as much a business proposition as anything else.'"

And again: "'It's our land,' says Sophie Chapin. 'We can do what we like with it.'

"'It's not our land. We've only paid for it. We belong to it, and it belongs to the people. Our people, they call 'em.'"

Chapin, too, falls gradually under the influence of the land that is called his. It is his as the Manor was Sir Richard's—in the sense that he is called upon to look after the welfare of the place, and of the people. He submits to the stubborn insistence of Cloke in the matter of bridges that should be made to endure—as land-

owners from the days of Diocletian to our own have submitted to the Hobdens of their day.

> "I am the land of their fathers,
> In me the virtue stays,
> I will bring back my children
> After certain days."

It is this virtue in the land which, in Chapin's case, makes the wreck of an overstrained money-machine into a healthy and confident man. In the story called "My Son's Wife" (*A Diversity of Creatures*) it again appears as a cure. Midmore had "suffered from the disease of the century since his early youth, and before he was thirty he was heavily marked with it. He and a few friends had rearranged Heaven very comfortably, but the reorganisation of Earth, which they called Society, was even greater fun. It demanded Work in the shape of many taxi-rides daily; hours of brilliant talk with brilliant talkers; some sparkling correspondence; a few silences (but on the understanding that their own turn should come soon) while other people expounded philosophies; and a fair number of picture-galleries, tea-fights, concerts, theatres, music-halls, and cinema-shows; the whole trimmed with love-making to women whose hair smelt of cigarette smoke." Midmore has no respect for

"the base convention which is styled marriage"; his need of self-expression finds its outlet in other ways.

Then, by the death of a relative, he becomes a landowner, and develops by degrees certain sympathies in common with the characters in Jorrocks (Stalky's favourite reading) that he at first despised. His responsibilities increase, and his sense of responsibility increases therewith. Then comes the time of floods, when "what is weak will surely go, and what is strong must prove it so"; the floods that

> "sweep corruption clean . . .
> That more the meadows may be green . . .
> The crops and cattle shall increase,
> Nor little children shall not cease. . . ."

In the stress of that time he discovers in himself the need and power of something better than he had known before. And he ends by fulfilling his duties as a man.

The English land, as Kipling sees it, is not a thing that lends itself to exploitation, or to cultivation from the point of view of the owner's convenience. It has no use for men of the Sangres type. It is not even what Chapin would call a business proposition. Rather, it is something which possesses

the possessor, lays on him responsibility, calling for effort and sacrifice continually—demanding and encouraging the best that is in him. We are vassals of the land, as we are vassals of life; a noble service, and a privilege to pay. There is no honour for a man in declaring that he owes allegiance to none, as there is no cause for pride in a woman who declares herself "free," and no servant of babes.

In *The Light that Failed*, Dick Heldar declares, with the sententious earnestness of a young man in love, that only the free are bond, and only the bond are free. Even so Sir Richard Dalyngridge is glad to tell his Lady that "there is no captive in this valley except one, and he is not a Saxon." And there is this virtue in the English land, that it wins whoever holds it to render homage as a lover, taking pride in that service.

This is Kipling's England. So he sees it, and so, he believes, it will endure. "England shall bide till Judgment Tide, by Oak and Ash and Thorn."

"In an evil age," says the regimental chaplain ("In the Presence"), "it is good to hear such things." There are prophets enough in our day for whom our living heritage is an encumbrance only; who see no grandeur either in lordship or service, and

would make us ignobly one with the mass of the world we have leavened.

In such an age, it is good to believe that our England is something beyond all other lands; that there lives a spirit there, native and persistent as oak and ash and thorn, and patient in the knowledge of its power and destiny; that

> "She is not any common earth,
> Water or wood or air,
> But Merlin's Isle. . . ."

Good men have held this faith, and died for it; knowing they were not the first, *believing they were not the last*, so to believe; trusting that others would come after them to prove the truth, as they had proved the greatness, of their creed.

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